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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Work With Boys

Mr. F. A. Crosby, in the *American Youth* for June, offers a happy suggestion with reference to the much-discussed boy problem. Under the topic "Inter-Church Work with Boys" he insists that an individual church may promote an adequate policy of work with its boys and yet neglect the possibilities open to it as one of a group of churches. It is not enough merely to maintain boys' athletic contests between churches; there must be a religious, social, and recreative program carried on by a group of churches in a community through a representative body of adults and older boys. Inter-church effort will furnish such zest and satisfaction as boy nature demands.

For the normal boy is not an active denominationalist, but rather delights in uniting with his equals and recognized leaders in a greater movement which involves difficult "stunts," secures the enthusiasm of numbers, and makes possible tangible results. But at present Sunday-school work is generally conducted on the opposite plan. The boys of a gang may be together every other day of the week, and possibly even a good part of Sunday, but as regards religious activities the gang is disintegrated, broken up for the Sunday school into its various groups. Inter-church effort, while it may not entirely eradicate this defect, will greatly minimize the weakness by making possible the community appeal in work among the boys of our cities. There are so many boys outside the church or Bible school that no individual organization can well provide for adequate work among them, but several churches together could meet the present peremptory challenge for community-wide effort among boys in a campaign of welfare for boys in factories; a crusade for clean habits; a persistent effort for better home environment in the case of boys of congested districts.

This will, of course, necessitate qualified leaders, more publicity, better facilities, and more complete organization. Here the inter-church group enters to advantage. It can carry on, with every hope of reasonable success, all the varied activities of healthy boy-life; athletics, outings, literary efforts, social-religious conferences and functions, welfare work, and finally training classes for the developing of such boys as may give promise of talent in this line. "Activities on a broader scale, competition by larger groups of men and boys in social and recreative functions; opportunity for study by observation and comparison; better facilities and equipment—these, and other elements more obvious in group than in individual church effort, furnish an incentive and an enthusiasm which is attracting men to church boys' work where the inter-church plan is being tried."

Religious Education in School and College

Under the above title Mr. H. M. J. Klein writes, in a recent issue of the *Reformed Church Review*, of the present public interest in religious education as a part of the spirit of Eucken's "new idealism." Defining religion as primarily not a creed, not conduct, not worship, but a life, the sharing of God's life by the spirit of man; characterizing education as not synonymous with instruction, not confined to the school, but the resultant of all the influences of life upon the individual, the writer makes a strong plea for a religious education which shall not be isolated and fragmentary, but the permanent and controlling element in the whole development of human personality.

The chief thing in religious education must be found in the personality of the teacher, and it is to the presence of teachers who are religious in character and reverent in spirit that such tremendous religious

influence is thrown about pupils in our American schools and colleges today.

But the spirit of the new age is declaring that this is not enough, that there is no sufficient reason for the exclusion of formal instruction in the Bible from the schools of the land, even though we rightly continue the policy of separation of church and state. Hence modern idealism is attempting to provide for thoroughgoing instruction in biblical subjects. True, the forms which this attempt is taking are bewildering in their variety and there is even confusion, but men are feeling that, whatever method

may be adopted, essential religion, that which exalts the things of the human spirit over things physical and material, must be taught in schools and colleges in such manner as to give faith in the eternal significance of life and the world, reverence for the sacredness of the individual person, and a sense of simple trust in God. Leaders today are more than ever seeking the religious basis for education and are emphasizing more strongly than heretofore that essential religion must continue to be the inspiration of the highest educational ideals.

CHURCH EFFICIENCY

H. Stanley Emery, in the April *Hartford Seminary Record*, writes of settlement work in the country under the title, "A Vision of Rural Work." Applying the "settlement idea" to Christian work in the country, the minister of the gospel finds himself at his post, not limited in sympathy to the members of his own immediate congregation as comprising all the people in the community he cares to know, but striving to be servant of all, everywhere doing good. His interest in everything which has to do with the welfare of all his fellow-men soon attracts men and women of similar spirit, and without any formal organization the influence of those who think alike and will naturally act alike sooner or later becomes the guiding force in the development of the life of the entire region.

Of course, this multiplication of interests and associations will involve increasing responsibilities. It may, for example, lead the minister to the task of house-to-house visitation, a careful sociological study of a township, or, even better, may lead him to join a fellow-minister in this important undertaking. Perhaps a couple of laymen will become sufficiently interested to join the effort with conveyances of their own, and in a comparatively short time such a com-

pany of workers possesses a most valuable record of this township. Neighboring townships will probably be included and in a relatively brief period the whole country round about may be intimately known, facts and conditions studied at first hand, and the forces of moral and social uplift so organized and inspired as to bring gratifying results.

Perhaps a social center can be found and a worker established there. The co-operation of the local school teacher could in most cases be enlisted and the schoolhouse used as a social center for the settlement work. Here pastor, teacher, public-spirited physician, progressive farmer, respected business man, skilled housewife could all find a forum for the message each could give just as at a city settlement house. To these might be added as opportunity offered the transient summer visitor, scholar, artist, musician, athlete, who could undoubtedly contribute to the enrichment of the life of the community.

Again, the influence of this sort of work upon the social evils prevalent in so many rural communities can be and has been of such nature as to put restraint upon the disorderly elements. In one direction alone almost untold benefit may result—such